

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 6617

BILL NUMBER: HB 1387

NOTE PREPARED: Jan 31, 2013

BILL AMENDED: Jan 31, 2013

SUBJECT: Local Veterans' Service Officers.

FIRST AUTHOR: Rep. Speedy

FIRST SPONSOR:

BILL STATUS: CR Adopted - 1st House

FUNDS AFFECTED: X GENERAL
X DEDICATED
FEDERAL

IMPACT: State & Local

Summary of Legislation: (Amended) This bill has the following provisions:

- (1) Provides that county and city service officers must be certified by the Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA).
- (2) Requires the Veterans' Affairs Commission to:
 - (1) establish standards for certification of county and city service officers; and
 - (2) establish and administer a written examination for renewal of the certification of county and city service officers.
- (3) Requires a county or city service officer to obtain certification from the department within 30 days after becoming employed as a service officer.
- (4) Requires a new county or city service officer, within one year after becoming employed as a service officer, to attend a course and become accredited to represent veterans.
- (5) Requires a county or city service officer employed prior to July 1, 2013, to attend a course and become accredited to represent veterans by July 1, 2015.
- (6) Establishes a Service Officer Scholarship Fund to provide scholarships for expenses associated with service officer training.
- (7) Annually appropriates \$46,000 to the Service Officer Scholarship Fund.

Effective Date: July 1, 2013.

Explanation of State Expenditures: (Revised) *Summary:* This bill annually appropriates \$46,000 of General Fund moneys to the nonreverting Service Officer Scholarship Fund for the purposes of providing scholarships

to veteran service officers to receive accreditation.

(Revised) Additional Information:

Accreditation: Under the bill, veteran service officers are to become accredited by a national organization and annually renew accreditation as a condition of representing veterans. The Service Officer Scholarship Fund is established to help veteran service officers with accreditation fees. The maximum scholarship amount is \$500 for new accreditation and \$200 for accreditation renewals.

In order to receive a scholarship from the Fund, veteran service officers must petition the Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA). As a result, the workload of the IDVA could increase, but should be within the routine administrative function of the IDVA and are expected to be absorbed using existing staff and resource levels.

Certification: The IDVA reports they currently certify county and city veteran service officers with a certification test as required under 915 IAC 1-1-2. Additionally, by the decision of the IDVA Director, this certification test is annually administered to all CVSOs as a condition of employment as a CVSO. Consequently, requiring the IDVA to provide a certification process for county and city veteran service officers is expected to have no new impact on the IDVA.

Explanation of State Revenues:

Explanation of Local Expenditures: (Revised) A current county and city veteran service officer who does not receive accreditation and certification from the IDVA could be ineligible to be employed as a service officer.

County and city veteran service officer salaries are paid from local funds. To the extent a county or city veteran service officer does not obtain certification and accreditation, county or city expenditures could decrease. Decreases in county and city expenditures will depend on the duration a veteran service officer is unable to attain certification and accreditation or until a replacement accredited and certified veteran service officer can be employed. Actual decreases are unknown.

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected: IDVA.

Local Agencies Affected: Cities and counties.

Information Sources: Tom Applegate, IDVA.

Fiscal Analyst: Bill Brumbach, 232-9559.